

Appln. No. 09/967,233
Amendment dated November 7, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed September 6, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Withdrawn)

2. (Withdrawn).

3. (Withdrawn)

4. (Withdrawn)

5. (Withdrawn)

6. (Withdrawn)

7. (Withdrawn)

8. (Currently amended) A method for real-time online search processing over inter-connected computer networks, the method comprises the steps of:

a. accessing an offline database having vendor descriptions for a plurality of vendor sites over inter-connected computer networks, the vendor descriptions having information about each of the plurality of vendor sites include:

i. a URL for each of the plurality of vendor sites;

ii. a search form URL for each of the plurality of vendors;

iii. description of domains found in each of the plurality of vendor sites;

iv. generalized rules about how product information is organized on each of the plurality of vendor sites;

v. samples of price and product information retrieved from the plurality of vendors;

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- b. receiving from an online user a price comparison request for a desired product;
- c. identifying from the vendor descriptions, vendor sites which may have price information relevant to the price comparison request;
- d. constructing search requests for the desired product using the vendor descriptions for each of the identified vendor sites, including the corresponding search form URL;
- e. submitting directly to the identified vendor sites the constructed search requests;
- f. extracting price and product information from search results received in response to the submitted search requests, wherein the extracted price and product information are in a native language of the site; and
- g. displaying the extracted price and product information to the user.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the general rules include delimiters which can uniquely identify the occurrence of price and associated information within each of the plurality of vendors.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the URLs of the plurality of vendor sites, and the extracted price and product information are stored in a database.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the URLs of the plurality of vendor sites, and the extracted price and product information which are stored in the database are updated periodically.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the URLs of the plurality of vendor sites and the extracted price and product information, which are stored in the database, are automatically updated daily.

13. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein each of the plurality of vendor descriptions is specific to a different online store.

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14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein only one vendor description for each different online store is stored in a database.

15. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the extracting step includes the step of verifying accurate matches in the search results received in response to the submitted search requests with the desired product.

16. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the displaying step includes the step of displaying price and product information for the desired product only from the vendor site having the best price.

17. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the displaying step includes the step of displaying price and product information for the desired product in a selectable arrangement.

18. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the displaying step includes the step of displaying price and product information for the desired product and which has been sorted according to price.

19. (Original) The method of claim 8, further includes a step of user authentication comprising a security interface.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein the security interface categorizes users as temporary trial and life members.

21. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein vendors in the plurality of vendor sites are registered or non-registered vendors.

22. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the vendor descriptions are automatically constructed through an inductive learning method.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the inductive learning method can work in multilingual environments.

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24. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the inductive learning method is domain independent.

25. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the inductive learning method operates in multiple domains such as books, electronic products, movies, or other products.

26. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the inductive learning method uses a small set of training data.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein the training data includes product examples and the URL from online stores.

28. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein the inductive learning method can extract and identify data independent of presentation style of the online store.

29. (Currently amended) A method for real-time online search processing over inter-connected computer networks, the method comprises the steps of:

a. maintaining in an offline database information for a plurality of vendor sites over inter-connected computer networks, the information includes URLs, search form URLs, description of domains, and vendor descriptions, wherein the vendor descriptions include generalized rules about how product information is organized on each of the vendor sites;

b. processing parameters for a price comparison request for a desired product using the information maintained in the offline database, while price comparison request is received from an online user;

c. extracting real-time price and product information from identified ones of the plurality of vendor sites from information received in response to search requests constructed using the information maintained in the offline data base for each of the identified vendor sites, including a search form URL, and submitted directly to the identified vendor sites, wherein the extracted price and product information are in a native language of the site; and